

Research Statement for Peer Review of Creative Works

Live Performance of Creative Works

Ross Hall

Producer - New Interpretation of a play - The Laramie Project

Research Background

The Laramie Project, by renowned American Playwright Moises Kaufmann, is based on the gay bashing and murder of a young University of Wyoming student in 1998. My 2006 production of the play at the University of Ballarat explored the theatrical and social resonance such a production may have within the context of a university city in regional Australia.

Research Contribution

The performance of this play in Ballarat offered an opportunity to examine thematic, cultural and sociological issues emanating from the original story in a unique and entirely innovative way. Parallels between the original social setting for the piece, Laramie, Wyoming, and a regional Australian University were investigated through the performative transposition. Current social issues such as discrimination, homophobia, generational beliefs, youth alienation, and the temporary social status of tertiary students in a Regional Arts setting all resonated and were explored in a new and, at times, confronting way.

Research Significance

A broad spectrum of responses was received from the performances - all of them passionate, all of them profound, all of them attesting to the contentious and significant nature of such an artistic endeavour. Social and cultural issues arising from *The Laramie Project* are 'living' issues for those in Ballarat. The issues enacted by student actor/artists were, and are, to varying degrees, *their* experiences. Youth violence, with its complex profile of causation and action, is ongoing in Ballarat. It is often felt most acutely by those belonging to its apparently itinerant student body. The 2006 production of *The Laramie Project* was a major contribution to the discussion of these important issues.